

**The representatives of the United States of America,
in Congress assembled, to the people in general, and
particularly to the inhabitants of Pennsylvania, and the
adjacent states.**

The **REPRESENTATIVES** of the **UNITED STATES** of *America*, in **CONGRESS** assembled, To the **PEOPLE** in general, and particularly to the Inhabitants of *Pennsylvania*, and the adjacent **STATES**.

FRIENDS and BRETHREN, **WE** think it our Duty to address a few Words of Exhortation to you in this important Crisis. You are not unacquainted with the History of the Rise and Progress of this War. A Plan was carried on by the British Ministry for several Years in a systematic Manner to enslave you to that Kingdom. After various Attempts in an artful and insidious Manner to bring into Practice the laying you under Tribute, they at last openly and decisively asserted their Right of making Laws to bind you *in all Cases whatsoever*.

Opposition was made to these Encroachments by earnest and humble Petitions from every Legislature on the Continent, and more than once by the Congress representing the whole. These were treated with the utmost Contempt. Acts of the most unjust and oppressive Nature were passed and carried into Execution, such as exempting the Soldiers charged with Murder in America from a legal Trial, and ordering them to be carried to Britain for certain Absolution, as also directing Prisoners taken at Sea to be entered on board their Ships, and obliged either to kill their own Friends or fall themselves by their Hands. We only mention these from among the many oppressive Acts of Parliament as Proofs to what horrid Injustice the Love of Dominion will sometimes carry Societies as well as Men. At the same Time to shew how insensible they will be to the sufferings of others, you may see by the Preambles to the Acts and Addresses to the

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King, that they constantly extol their own Lenity in those very Proceedings which filled this whole Continent with Resentment and Horror.

To crown the whole, they have waged War with us in the most cruel and unrelenting Manner, employing not only the Force of the British Nation but hiring foreign Mercenaries, who, without Feeling, indulge themselves in Rapine and Bloodshed. The Spirit indeed of the Army in general is but too well determined, by their inhuman Treatment of those who have unhappily fallen into their Hands.

It is well known to you, that at the universal Desire of the People, and with the hearty Approbation of every Province, the Congress declared the United States free and independent; a Measure not only just, but which had become absolutely necessary. It would have been impossible to have resisted the formidable Force destined against us last Spring, while we confessed ourselves the Subjects of that State against which we had taken Arms. Besides, after repeated Trials, no Terms could be obtained but Pardon, upon absolute Submission, which every public Body in America had rejected with Disdain.

Resistance has now been made with a Spirit and Resolution becoming a free People, and with a Degree of Success hitherto which could scarce have been expected. The Enemy have been expelled from the northern Provinces where they at first had Possession, and have been repulsed in their Attempts upon the southern by the undaunted Valour of the Inhabitants. Our Success at Sea, in the Capture of the Enemies Ships, has been astonishing. They have been compelled to retreat before the northern Army. Notwithstanding the Difficulty and Uncertainty at first of our being supplied with Ammunition and military Stores, those we have now in Abundance, and by some late Arrivals and Captures there is an immediate Prospect of sufficient Clothing for the Army.

What we have particularly in View, in this Address, is not only to promote Unanimity and Vigour through the whole States, but to excite the Inhabitants of *Pennsylvania*, *New Jersey*, and the adjacent States to an immediate and spirited Exertion in Opposition to

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the Army that now threatens to take Possession of this City. You know that during the whole Campaign they have been checked in their Progress, and have not till within these two Weeks ventured above ten Miles from their Shipping. Their present Advances are owing not to any capital Defeat, or a Want of Valour in the Army that opposed them, but to a sudden Diminution of its Numbers from the Expiration of those short Enlistments which, to ease the People, were at first adopted. Many have already joined the Army to supply the Deficiency, and we call in the most earnest Manner on all the Friends of Liberty to exert themselves without Delay in this pressing Emergency. In every other Part your Arms have been successful, and in other Respects our sacred Cause is in the most promising Situation. We think it proper to inform and assure you that essential Services have been already rendered us by foreign States, and we have received the most positive Assurances of further Aid. Let us not then be wanting to ourselves. Even a *short* Resistance will probably be effectual, as General LEE is advancing with a strong Reinforcement, and his Troops in high Spirits.

What Pity is it then that the rich and populous City of *Philadelphia* should fall into the Enemy's Hands, or that we should not lay hold of the Opportunity of destroying their principal Army now removed from the Ships of War, in which their greatest Strength lies.

It is certainly needless to multiply Arguments in such a Situation. All that is valuable to us as Men and Freemen is at Stake. It does not admit of a Question, what would be the Effect of our finally failing. Even the boasted Commissioners for giving Peace to America have not offered, and do not now offer any Terms but Pardon on absolute Submission. And though (blessed by God) even the Loss of *Philadelphia* would not be the Loss of the Cause--Yet while it can be saved, let us not, in the Close of the Campaign, afford then, such Ground of Triumph; but give a Check to their Progress, and convince our Friends, in the distant Parts, that **ONE SPIRIT ANIMATES THE WHOLE.**

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Confiding in your Fidelity and Zeal in a Contest the most illustrious and important, and firmly trusting in the good Providence of God, we wish you Happiness and Success. *Given at Philadelphia, December 10, 1776. By order of Congress, **JOHN HANCOCK**, President.*